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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR FEBRUARY 09, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for February 09, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

BOLGE: Mustafa Tuncel (from AKP), Deputy Chairperson of the Adana Municipality City Council, said that the local press was scrutinizing with great attentiveness issues coming up in the municipalities, however, according to Tuncel, the press could be ignoring what might have been going on in the Governor's Office in Adana.

ZAMAN / HURRIYET: Court action was allegedly brought against two Turkish officers of the Incirlik Air Base in Adana's 8th First Instance Penalty Court on charges of stealing computer parts from a place where U.S. personnel were storing scrap material, and selling them to clients outside of the base.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Eleven people, whose statements were taken on charges of damaging a public property car during the Semdinli incident in November 9, 2005, have been arraigned on Tuesday. The court ordered arrest for six of the 11 persons in the course of standing trial. The daily reported that the recent arrest of those people was sharply contrasted with the release of Sergeant Tanju Cavus who was released while standing trial on charges of opening fire on a demonstrating crowd following the Semdinli incident.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM / ZAMAN: Reportedly, the owner of the Soz TV in Diyarbakir revealed the relationship of officer Ali Kaya, one of the defendants of the Semdinli case arrested as he stood trial, and Land Forces Commander Yasar Buyukanit, and said as he gave his statement to the Turkish Parliamentary Commission Probing the Semdinli Case, that the two were allegedly building a villa in the Mediterranean region as partners. Meanwhile, Zaman daily claimed that three intelligence offices in Turkey gave contradictory information to the Commission about the Semdinli incident. National Security Directorate reportedly blamed Jandarma (National Command) in its report submitted to the Prime Minister. The daily reminded remarks of Chief of the Security Directorate's Intelligence Office to the commission saying that Semdinli incident was caused by the public servants' local undisciplined acts. Chief of the Jandarma Intelligence Office reportedly blamed the PKK as the perpetrator of the bombings. And lastly, the daily reminded Hakkari Regional Director of MIT intelligence center as telling commission members that MIT was not knowledgeable about the bombings in Hakkari between June and November in 2005.

OZGUR GUNDEM: A commemoration ceremony has been held in France's Montpellier province to remember Viya Soran, a senior commander of the PKK Kongra-Gel who burned herself in February 1 in northern Iraq to protest policies pursued to "isolate" Abdullah Ocalan. Meanwhile, prisoners in a jail in Mus province said they will launch a hunger strike on the same grounds.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Police officer Hakan Acil, who was kidnapped by the PKK in October 9, 2005 and released towards the end of January 2006 (see press summary 01/30), will reportedly return to his job as soon as his 20-day-leave ends.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Two soldiers were allegedly killed in a Jandarma Battalion Command reportedly by their senior officer(s) two days ago. While the Prosecutor's Office denied such allegations, it is alleged that authorities from the prosecutor's office went to the place of the battalion to conduct an autopsy.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Zuheyir Amber, Hatay deputy and Deputy National Chairperson of AKP, said that the policy of giving compulsory religious courses to students should be abandoned and Cem houses should be accepted as religious worshipping areas of the Alawis.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Allegedly, a 14-year-old girl has committed suicide in Van's Saray district yesterday evening. An investigation has been started to probe the event. Meanwhile, Derik Municipality of Mardin has launched a survey called "No to Suicides" in order to spot the causes of the problems of youth and women, and to analyze and address the issue of suicides.

BOLGE: Pakistan's Ambassador to Ankara came to Gaziantep and paid a visit to the representatives of the chambers to show

appreciation for the chambers' support extended during the Pakistan earthquake. Ambassador Syed Iftikhar Hussain Shah paid his first visit to the Gaziantep Chamber Of Commerce. Shah said during his visit that they must also explore the great potential for commerce between the two countries.

EVRENSEL: The daily reported that truck drivers have been suffering from long queues piling up at the Habur Border gate and low temperatures due to bad weather conditions.
REID